



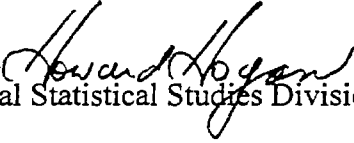
## MASTER FILE

MAR 23 2000

DSSD Census 2000 Procedures and Operations Memorandum Series #P-1

MEMORANDUM FOR      Brian Monaghan  
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                                 Field Division

Attention:                Management Training Branch  
                                 Field Division

From:                      Howard Hogan   
                                 Chief, Decennial Statistical Studies Division

Prepared By:            Nathan Carter  
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Subject:                  Observation of Questionnaire Assistance Center Clerk training at  
                                 the Alexandria Local Census Office

### Introduction

On March 9, I visited the Alexandria Local Census Office to observe Questionnaire Assistance Center clerk training. Specifically, I wanted to observed how the trainer presented the training and see how the trainees responded to it.

### Specific Observations

When I arrived, the trainees were filling out the administrative forms, so I was taken on a tour of the LCO by the Assistant Manager for Field Operations (AMFO). During the tour, he made comments to me about some of the short comings of the QAC operation that he noticed.

- He felt that the biggest problem was the shortage of volunteers.
- Another problem that the AMFO ran into was each county or area that the LCO covered provided a list of possible QAC sites, but each of the counties had a different idea of what the list was for. Arlington and Fairfax counties provided a list of sites that they wanted the LCO to man. Alexandria provided a list but did

no checking in advance to see if the sites were even suitable for a QAC.

- Aside from the shortcomings, the AMFO was pleased to report that they had reached the goals for recruiting that had been given to them. They have also set internal goals which they have not yet attained, but they hope to soon.

After the tour, I went in and observed training. For the most part training went very well. The materials had been checked to make sure that each kit was complete and the trainers were very familiar with the program and the training materials.

While I was observing the training I noticed some of the problems with the training and some were pointed out to me by the trainers. I will list them here.

- The biggest problem that I noticed was that the trainers did not understand the concept of verbatim training. The trainers seemed to be anticipating every question that would be asked and would interrupt the training with answers to the supposed questions, making the training run late.
- Another problem was that trainees were told that they should not under any circumstances fill out a questionnaire for a respondent. The training materials say to avoid filling out the questionnaire, but in some situations it was permitted. One such instance is when a respondent, who was illiterate or physically challenged in some way, came in for assistance in filling out the questionnaire, it should be provided.
- It was impractical for the QAC clerks to travel each day to the LCO to turn in their work slips.
- The Polish Language Assistance Guide (LAG) was chosen to be part of the training materials as an example of the LAGs. The trainees found it to be of little or no use, because they did not speak Polish.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

I would recommend that the AMFO and any other LCO staff in charge of training be instructed on how to give verbatim training. The importance of verbatim training should be stressed. The training sessions would go more smoothly and rapidly if the training materials are followed. The trainers should wait to answer common questions until they are actually asked.

The Partnership Specialists' role is to be a liaison between the Census Bureau and business and community organizations in the area. They were also asked to find volunteers for the QACs. The Partnership Specialists in the Alexandria LCO were not able to come up with a sufficient number of volunteers. The AMFO recommended that the LCO find the volunteers because they had more experience with recruiting. I feel that is a sound recommendation.

I would recommend that the QAC clerks be told what the pay schedule is and when to bring their work slips in the office so they can be included in the correct pay period. This will cut down on unnecessary travel time.

I would also recommend that a Spanish LAG should be used in the training materials. The majority of paid QAC clerks will be hired because they are bilingual (Spanish/English). Also, most people needing language assistance will be requiring help in Spanish.

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